

Then came the Turks in the fourteenth century to begin a reign ¹⁷⁵ which lasted five hundred years. It was in this period, termed by Bulgarians *Igoto* or The Yoke, that Dragalevtsy was supposedly founded.

A pregnant sow was the beginning of it all. At least, so the ⁵³⁹ villagers said. Two or three hundred years ago this particular sow ¹⁷³ ran away from home and grunted up the mountainside to bear her litter in the brush. Baba Dragana, a widow who owned the animal, after a long search found her on the spot where the village church now stands. Since the old woman could not carry the animals back to her village, just south of Sofia, she built a small hut where she was. She liked the place so much that she decided to stay; finally she persuaded her former neighbors to join her. The Turks who robbed them in the village on the highway, she argued, would not harm them on the mountainside. Besides, there was an ample supply of delicious water near her new shelter. The ten families who joined her began to call the settlement Dragalevtsy in honor of Baba Dragana, and the name has remained to this day.

Baba Dragana was also known for her fiery patriotism, as well as for "eternal beauty, strength, and power," if we are to believe an old folk song. This beauty was noticed by the Turkish Pasha in Sofia, and led to frequent meetings between Dragana and him. Years passed. Dragana lost her beauty but retained her strength and power. One day a Bulgarian shepherd, wounded and beaten, stumbled into her yard. Before he died three days later Dragana learned that Turkish shepherds, enraged because his animals had entered their pastures, had fallen upon him. This was too much for Dragana. She called her sons about her, armed them with pitchforks, and sent them out to avenge the death of a fellow countryman. Blood for blood. A few days later their yard was surrounded by Turkish soldiers who promptly bound the sons and carted them off to Sofia for a summary trial before the Pasha. Death was their sentence. But just before the execution the bold Dragana appeared to ask indignantly if the Pasha knew what he was doing. "These are your sons that you are about to put to death," she said. "If you do not believe me, see how much they resemble you." Confused, the Pasha looked at Dragana's sons, saw the resemblance, and called off the death sentence.